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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling an automatic machine comprising a number of operating devices located along a production line for producing a succession of articles (2); some of the operating devices (10) comprising at least a relevant adjustable work member, which operates in a continually repeated work cycle and when activated can operate in a number of different operating configurations substantially independently from the other work members to adjust a relevant first characteristic of said articles (2); for each adjustable work member, each relevant operating configuration establishing the manner how the work member interacts with the articles (2); the method comprising the steps of

receiving, during normal operation of the automatic machine (1), a command to adjust said first characteristic;

and adjusting the operating configuration of said adjustable work member without modifying the operating configuration of all the other work members to adjust said first characteristic of the articles (2) as the adjustable work member performs a following work cycle to process an article (2); the adjustment to the operating configuration of said adjustable work member comprising the passage from a start operating configuration to an end operating configuration different from the start operating configuration;

wherein the configuration of said adjustable work member is adjusted by acting on a servo actuator connected to and for setting and maintaining a given

configuration of the adjustable work member; the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is not adjusted until the adjustable work member is set, in the course of its work cycle, to a passive position in which the adjustable work member does not substantially interact with the processing of a said article (2).

Claim 2 - Cancelled.

3. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said work cycle comprises an active portion in which said adjustable work member interacts with the processing of a said article (2), and a passive portion in which the adjustable work member does not substantially interact with the processing of a current article (2), and stands by to interact with the processing of a next article (2); the operating configuration of said adjustable work member not being adjusted until said adjustable work member is in said passive portion of the work cycle.

4. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein adjustment to the operating configuration of said adjustable work member comprises the passage from a start operating configuration to an end operating configuration; the passage from the start operating configuration to the end operating configuration being divided into a number of elementary adjustments of given amounts to the operating configuration of the adjustable work member;

and each said elementary adjustment being made in the course of a respective work cycle, so that only one said elementary adjustment is made at each work cycle.

5. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein, when the command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, at least one said article (2) is identified as a transient article (2) to be eliminated; the operating configuration of said adjustable work member being adjusted as the adjustable work member works on said transient article (2).

6. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein a number of materials (4, 5, 6, 7) are supplied to process each said article (2); once the command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, the supply of said materials (4, 5, 6, 7) for processing at least one article (2) being cut off to produce a temporary interruption in the processing of the articles (2); and the operating configuration of said adjustable work member being adjusted when no article (2) is worked on by the adjustable work member as a result of said temporary interruption.

7. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein, by request of a user and during normal operation of the automatic machine (1), a

number of said articles (2) from said production line are detoured and fed to a user check station.

8. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein, when said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, a check is made to determine compatibility of the command with correct operation of the automatic machine (1); said command not being performed if incompatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1).

9. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 8, wherein previously memorized acceptance ranges are employed to determine whether said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is compatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1).

10. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 8, wherein, to determine whether said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is compatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1), the effect of the adjustment on the automatic machine (1) is simulated by means of a model of the automatic machine (1).

11. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein

said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is generated by a user by means of a user interface device (34).

12. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 11, wherein a screen (35) of said user interface device (34) graphically shows the effect produced on said articles (2) by said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member.

Claims 13-27 Canceled

28. (Previously presented) A method of controlling an automatic machine comprising a number of operating devices located along a production line for producing a succession of articles (2); at least one operating device (10) comprising an adjustable work member, which operates in a continually repeated work cycle and can be set to a number of different operating configurations to adjust a first characteristic of said articles (2); the method comprising the steps of receiving, during normal operation of the automatic machine (1), a command to adjust said first characteristic; and adjusting the operating configuration of said adjustable work member to adjust said first characteristic of the articles (2) as the adjustable work member performs a work cycle to process an article (2); adjustment to the operating configuration of said adjustable work member comprising the passage from a start operating configuration to an end operating configuration; the passage from the start operating configuration to the end

operating configuration being divided into a number of elementary adjustments of given amounts to the operating configuration of the adjustable work member; and each said elementary adjustment being made in the course of a respective work cycle, so that only one said elementary adjustment is made at each work cycle.

29. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 28, wherein, when the command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, at least one said article (2) is identified as a transient article (2) to be eliminated; the operating configuration of said adjustable work member being adjusted as the adjustable work member works on said transient article (2).

30. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 28, wherein a number of materials (4, 5, 6, 7) are supplied to process each said article (2); once the command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, the supply of said materials (4, 5, 6, 7) for processing at least one article (2) being cut off to produce a temporary interruption in the processing of the articles (2); and the operating configuration of said adjustable work member being adjusted when no article (2) is worked on by the adjustable work member as a result of said temporary interruption.

31. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 28, wherein, when said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, a check is made to determine compatibility of the command with correct operation of the automatic machine (1); said command not being performed if incompatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1).

32. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 31, wherein previously memorized acceptance ranges are employed to determine whether said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is compatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1).

33. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 31, wherein, to determine whether said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is compatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1), the effect of the adjustment on the automatic machine (1) is simulated by means of a model of the automatic machine (1).

34. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 28, wherein said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is generated by a user by means of a user interface device (34).

35. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in Claim 34, wherein a screen (35) of said user interface device (34) graphically shows the effect produced on said articles (2) by said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member.

Add the following new claims:

36. (New) A method of controlling an automatic machine comprising a number of operating devices located along a production line for producing a succession of articles (2); some of the operating devices (10) comprising at least a relevant adjustable work member, which operates in a continually repeated work cycle and when activated can operate in a number of different operating configurations substantially independently from the other work members to adjust a relevant first characteristic of said articles (2); for each adjustable work member, each relevant operating configuration establishing the manner how the work member interacts with the articles (2); the method comprising the steps of receiving, during normal operation of the automatic machine (1), a command to adjust said first characteristic;

and adjusting the operating configuration of said adjustable work member without modifying the operating configuration of all the other work members to adjust said first characteristic of the articles (2) as the adjustable work member performs a following work cycle to process an article (2); the adjustment to the operating configuration of said adjustable work member comprising the passage

from a start operating configuration to an end operating configuration different from the start operating configuration;

when the command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, at least one said article (2) is identified as a transient article (2) to be eliminated; the operating configuration of said adjustable work member being adjusted as the adjustable work member works on said transient article (2).

37. (New) A method of controlling an automatic machine comprising a number of operating devices located along a production line for producing a succession of articles (2); some of the operating devices (10) comprising at least a relevant adjustable work member, which operates in a continually repeated work cycle and when activated can operate in a number of different operating configurations substantially independently from the other work members to adjust a relevant first characteristic of said articles (2); for each adjustable work member, each relevant operating configuration establishing the manner how the work member interacts with the articles (2); the method comprising the steps of

receiving, during normal operation of the automatic machine (1), a command to adjust said first characteristic;

and adjusting the operating configuration of said adjustable work member without modifying the operating configuration of all the other work members to adjust said first characteristic of the articles (2) as the adjustable work member performs a following work cycle to process an article (2); the adjustment to the

operating configuration of said adjustable work member comprising the passage from a start operating configuration to an end operating configuration different from the start operating configuration;

a number of materials (4, 5, 6, 7) are supplied to process each said article (2); once the command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, the supply of said materials (4, 5, 6, 7) for processing at least one article (2) being cut off to produce a temporary interruption in the processing of the articles (2); and the operating configuration of said adjustable work member being adjusted when no article (2) is worked on by the adjustable work member as a result of said temporary interruption.

38. (New) A method of controlling an automatic machine comprising a number of operating devices located along a production line for producing a succession of articles (2); some of the operating devices (10) comprising at least a relevant adjustable work member, which operates in a continually repeated work cycle and when activated can operate in a number of different operating configurations substantially independently from the other work members to adjust a relevant first characteristic of said articles (2); for each adjustable work member, each relevant operating configuration establishing the manner how the work member interacts with the articles (2); the method comprising the steps of:

receiving, during normal operation of the automatic machine (1), a command to adjust said first characteristic;

and adjusting the operating configuration of said adjustable work member without modifying the operating configuration of all the other work members to adjust said first characteristic of the articles (2) as the adjustable work member performs a following work cycle to process an article (2); the adjustment to the operating configuration of said adjustable work member comprising the passage from a start operating configuration to an end operating configuration different from the start operating configuration; wherein, when said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, a check is made to determine compatibility of the command with correct operation of the automatic machine (1); said command not being performed if incompatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1).

39. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 38, wherein previously memorized acceptance ranges are employed to determine whether said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is compatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1).

40. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 38, wherein, to determine whether said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is compatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1), the effect of the adjustment on the automatic machine (1) is simulated by means of a model of the automatic machine (1).

41. (New) A method of controlling an automatic machine comprising a number of operating devices located along a production line for producing a succession of articles (2); some of the operating devices (10) comprising at least a relevant adjustable work member, which operates in a continually repeated work cycle and when activated can operate in a number of different operating configurations substantially independently from the other work members to adjust a relevant first characteristic of said articles (2); for each adjustable work member, each relevant operating configuration establishing the manner how the work member interacts with the articles (2); the method comprising the steps of receiving, during normal operation of the automatic machine (1), a command to adjust said first characteristic;

and adjusting the operating configuration of said adjustable work member without modifying the operating configuration of all the other work members to adjust said first characteristic of the articles (2) as the adjustable work member performs a following work cycle to process an article (2); the adjustment to the operating configuration of said adjustable work member comprising the passage from a start operating configuration to an end operating configuration different from the start operating configuration;

wherein said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is generated by a user by means of a user interface device (34); a screen (35) of said user interface device (34) graphically showing the effect produced on said articles (2) by said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member.

42. (New) A method of controlling an automatic machine comprising a number of operating devices located along a production line for producing a succession of articles (2); some of the operating devices (10) comprising at least a relevant adjustable work member, which operates in a continually repeated work cycle and when activated can operate in a number of different operating configurations substantially independently from the other work members to adjust a relevant first characteristic of said articles (2); for each adjustable work member, each relevant operating configuration establishing the manner how the work member interacts with the articles (2); the method comprising the steps of receiving, during normal operation of the automatic machine (1), a command to adjust said first characteristic from a user by means of a user interface device (34);

determining the adjustable work members involved with said first characteristic;

determining the current start configuration and the desired end configuration of each of the adjustable work members involved with said first characteristic;

and adjusting the operating configuration of each of the adjustable work members involved with said first characteristic without modifying the operating configuration of all the other work members to adjust said first characteristic of the articles (2) as each adjustable work member performs a following work cycle to process an article (2); the adjustment to the operating configuration of each said adjustable work member comprising the passage from a start operating

configuration to an end operating configuration different from the start operating configuration.

43. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 42, wherein the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is not adjusted until the adjustable work member is set, in the course of its work cycle, to a passive position in which the adjustable work member does not substantially interact with the processing of a said article (2).

44. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 43, wherein said work cycle comprises an active portion in which said adjustable work member interacts with the processing of a said article (2), and a passive portion in which the adjustable work member does not substantially interact with the processing of a current article (2), and stands by to interact with the processing of a next article (2); the operating configuration of said adjustable work member not being adjusted until said adjustable work member is in said passive portion of the work cycle.

45. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 42, wherein adjustment to the operating configuration of said adjustable work member comprises the passage from a start operating configuration to an end operating configuration; the passage from the start operating configuration to the end operating configuration being divided into a number of elementary adjustments of given amounts to the operating configuration of the adjustable work member; and each said

elementary adjustment being made in the course of a respective work cycle, so that only one said elementary adjustment is made at each work cycle.

46. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 42, wherein, when the command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, at least one said article (2) is identified as a transient article (2) to be eliminated; the operating configuration of said adjustable work member being adjusted as the adjustable work member works on said transient article (2).

47. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 42, wherein a number of materials (4, 5, 6, 7) are supplied to process each said article (2); once the command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, the supply of said materials (4, 5, 6, 7) for processing at least one article (2) being cut off to produce a temporary interruption in the processing of the articles (2); and the operating configuration of said adjustable work member being adjusted when no article (2) is worked on by the adjustable work member as a result of said temporary interruption.

48. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 42, wherein, when said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is received, a check is made to determine compatibility of the command with correct operation of the automatic machine (1); said command not being performed if incompatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1).

49. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 48, wherein previously memorized acceptance ranges are employed to determine whether said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is compatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1).

50. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 48, wherein, to determine whether said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is compatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1), the effect of the adjustment on the automatic machine (1) is simulated by means of a model of the automatic machine (1).

49. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 48, wherein previously memorized acceptance ranges are employed to determine whether said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is compatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1).

50. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 48, wherein, to determine whether said command to adjust the operating configuration of said adjustable work member is compatible with correct operation of the automatic machine (1), the effect of the adjustment on the automatic machine (1) is simulated by means of a model of the automatic machine (1).